

Triggers of Disease

Suspected (S) or Known (K) Health effects

Precautionary Alternatives

1) Pesticides: various exposure avenues such as food, in-home use, lawns, occupational exposure, drinking water, cotton clothing, chemically treated wood (e.g. playgrounds)

(K) **Varied** depending on chemicals: nerve toxicity, various types of cancer, endocrine disruption, sensitizer/irritants. (S) **Parkinsons**

Choose the many organic pest control methods for both indoors and yards available at better garden centers. Reduce the conditions that invite pests. Choose organic food and clothing; avoid treated wood.

2a) Ionizing Radiation: medical X-rays, CT scans, flouroscopy, radon gas, nuclear fallout

(K) **Cancer**, leukemia, birth defects, cataracts.

Minimize medical and dental radiation exposure.

2b) Non-ionizing Radiation: electromagnetic fields, microwaves, ultraviolet rays, computer monitors, etc.

(K) **Skin Cancer** from ultra-violet rays. (S) **Cancer**, leukemia, immune system damage and other health effects.

Avoid long-term proximity to electric power substations and power lines, microwave towers, electric blankets, VDTs and cell phones. Minimize sun exposure.

3) MBTE (Methyl tertiary butyl ether) gas additive

(S) **Cancer**, headaches, dizziness, respiratory and gastrointestinal irritation.

Support a ban on MTBE (an oxygenator.) There are alternative additives that achieve this purpose and gas can also be burned without it at all. Minimizing gasoline usage is the bottom line.

4) Dry-cleaning chemicals: perchloroethylene

(S) **Cancer**, nervous system effects, liver damage.

Use Rynex and wet cleaners.

5) Air contaminants: auto/truck emissions, power plant emissions (dioxins), incinerator emissions, metals, air fresheners

(S) **Asthma/respiratory damage**, cancer, reproductive damage, damage to the immune system.

Minimize fossil fuel consumption as a key way to reduce air pollutants and water contaminants. Drive a fuel efficient vehicle. Use indoor air filters. Support renewable energy sources.

6) Exposure to Superfund Site hazardous chemicals

(S) **Varied** depending on chemicals, including possible cancer & birth defects.

Clean up superfund sites; use consumer power to support industries that do not pollute in the first place.

7) Plastic and styrofoam food containers, plastic wrap, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) toys, etc.

(K) **Endocrine (hormone) disruption** (S) **Cancer**

Use glass, stainless steel, or non-lead ceramic food containers and do not microwave food in plastic or styro-foam containers.

8) Cleaning products & antimicrobial soaps

(S) **Respiratory irritation & asthma**; antimicrobials may produce resistant strains of bacteria.

Use non-toxic cleaners that do not contain VOCs, many of which are available at health food stores.

9) Meat and dairy products contaminated with antibiotics and growth hormones, fish contaminated with heavy metals, and pesticide contamination of these products

(S) **Endocrine Disruptors** in early puberty. Synthetic hormones may be potential cause of breast cancer; Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons produced in grilled meat are carcinogens; fat and cholesterol associated with **heart disease**, high blood pressure, stroke; heavy metals associated with neurological damage.

Reduce meat and dairy product consumption, and if you do choose to eat animal products, buy organic.

10) Asbestos

(K) **Lung cancer, asbestosis.**

Choose alternatives to asbestos that are fire retardant.

11) Smoking

(K) **Cancer, Stroke, Heart disease, Lung disease.**

Stop smoking.

12) Cosmetic ingredients: in creams, hair dyes/straighteners, nail products, shampoo e.g. sodium lauryl sulfate

(S) **Cosmetics may contain carcinogens** and respiratory irritants; may contain **phthalates** which disrupt hormones; sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS) may cause irritation and possible mutagenicity.

Use cosmetics which have fewer and more natural ingredients. Shampoos without SLS are available at health food stores. Use natural hair dyes and minimize straighteners.

13) Lack of exercise/obesity and overweight problems

(S) **Heart disease**, cancer, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, etc.

Exercise three times a week.

14) Acrylamide in potato chips and bread

(S) **Cancer**

Minimize consumption of baked or fried foods high in carbohydrates.

15) Paints and solvents

(S) **Irritants**, asthma triggers, reproductive effects.

Use low VOC (volatile organic chemical) paints available at eco-friendly home improvement stores.

16) Glue and other chemicals in carpets contain various hazardous chemicals & formaldehyde, polyurethane floor finishes

(S) **Carpet chemicals** associated with multiple chemical sensitivity; formaldehyde in carpets and some floor resins is a carcinogen; polyurethane emits VOCs which are respiratory irritants.

Use alternatives to carpets where possible, such as tile flooring. Use water based shellacs for wood floors instead of polyurethane, it may take an extra coat. Try sustainably harvested wood instead of particle-board.

17) Saccharin in toothpastes and chewing gums; aspartame

(S) **Saccharin:** carcinogen in lab rats, but recently removed from FDA's list of carcinogens. **Aspartame:** possible cancer, brain damage, headaches.

Avoid foods that contain saccharin or aspartame. Use moderate amounts of unrefined sugar cane, juice sweeteners, honey, etc. instead. Non-saccharin tooth pastes are available at health food stores.

18) Aluminum in pans and antiperspirants

(S) **Alzheimers**

Use glass, enamel or iron cooking utensils.

19) Non-stick pans

(S) **Releases dangerous polymer fumes**; health effects unclear, have not been studied.

Use glass, enamel or iron cooking utensils.

20) Light at night

(S) **Contrasts** to natural biorhythm and interferes with the pineal gland's production of the hormone melatonin; may contribute to breast cancer.

Minimize time after dark that you are exposed to lights.

21) Chlorine and fluorine in the water supply

(S) **Chlorine** associated with **bladder cancer**; the by-product chloroform is associated with asphyxia and cancer. Flourine associated with cancer, nerve toxicity, bone pathology, and dental fluorosis.

Install charcoal filters for kitchen faucets as well as showerheads. Urge your water district not to fluoridate the water, and use non-fluoridated toothpastes available at health food stores.

22) Genetic engineering of food

(S) **Allergic reactions**; interferes with natural biodiversity.

Choose organic food. Urge legislators to mandate labelling of GMO ingredients. Note: Currently, GMOs are NOT required to be labeled on American food though they are in other countries.

23) Trans-fatty acids found in hydrogenated oils, margarine and other foods

(S) **Promotes high cholesterol.**

Consume a healthy, well rounded diet of organic foods that are free of transfatty acids. Unrefined oils are a good replacement.

24) Black Mold

(K) **Allergic reactions**, possible nerve damage, sinus infections.
(S) **Cancer**

Reduce moisture in walls and keep surfaces clean. If a black mold is present, consider having professionals test & remove it if necessary.

25) Brominated Flame Retardants in mattresses, furniture, TVs

(S) **Found in breast milk**; impairs attention, learning, memory, and behavior in laboratory animals

Consider purchasing organic, or natural mattresses (which use borate powder or wool) and furniture from natural furniture stores or online.

